



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS
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FOUNDER
Mrs. Sybil Brand

CHAIRPERSON
Mrs. Eleanor R. Montañó

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Mr. Frank S. Bacio

Ms. Barbara Bigby
Ms. Rita Hall
Mr. John A. Hammargren
Ms. Anne S. Hill
Mr. Carl E. Moore

MINUTES OF THE **SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS** **MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING** **JULY 15, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montañó called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chair Montañó led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Chair Eleanor R. Montañó
Vice Chair Frank Bacio
Rita Hall
John A. Hammargren
Carl E. Moore

Excused Absence

Barbara Bigby
Anne S. Hill

Others Present

Carla Carr, Auditor-Controller
Alan P. Henry, Community Care Licensing
Frankie Shelton, Community Care Licensing
Luis Enriquez, Internal Services Department
Commander Margaret Ruiz, Sheriff's Department
Captain Warren Asmus, Sheriff's Department
Howard Wong, Probation Department

Staff

Martha Arana, Commission Services Staff
Jimmy Prieto, Commission Services Staff
Andrew Sevrin, Commission Services Staff

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chair Montaña welcomed everyone in attendance and requested that Department Representatives introduce themselves.

Community Care Licensing Division:

Ms. Frankie Shelton gave the following report:

- Renaissance Unlimited – 50, #5, closed as of 6/2/09, on a voluntary closure. In response to Commissioner Hammargren, Ms. Shelton reported that following group home closures, children are placed with certified foster family agencies under the care of certified foster parents.
- Various state departments are operating with furloughs on the first three Fridays of the month. Although offices will be closed to the public, staff will be on hand for emergency functions.

Sheriff's Department:

Commander Margaret Ruiz provided the Commission with the "Inmate Assaults on Staff" report, and reported that:

- For the past month there have been no complaints filed by inmates regarding the use of force by Deputy personnel.
- Construction of Mens Central Jail is pending; funding is available; however, contract approvals are under discussion.

Captain Warren Asmus reported the following:

- Floor repairs have been partially completed at the Long Beach Courthouse facility.
- The weapons screening area at the West Covina facility is being relocated to the North side of the court house in an effort to improve security issues.
- The gate at the Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center was repaired, but continues to operate improperly. Due to the possible closure to the Center, repairs to the gate might not be done.
- July 15, 2009 is the first furlough day for the courts. Legislation in Sacramento is pending that would close the courts completely. If legislation is passed, the Sheriff's salaries would be impacted.
- Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) is awaiting the Board of Supervisors' approval on the proposed merger of County Safety Police with LASD. The proposed merger is expected to be on the Board's agenda in August or September 2009. The merger is expected to open many positions for LASD.

Commissioner Hall requested that Captain Asmus look into the possibility of marking emergency departure routes with illuminated tape in County jails. She recommended that he speak to the Commander of the Pico Rivera Station who drafted a comprehensive safety plan.

If the State takes County court house fees, the Courts will face a significant financial impact resulting in:

- 1st phase – Court Room closures
- 2nd phase – Closures of Courthouses without lockups, i.e. Huntington Park and San Pedro Courthouses
- 3rd phase – Consolidation of Services, meaning one facility, i.e., Whittier would close up their lock-up and only operate civil cases. Criminal cases would be transferred to another facility, i.e. Bellflower, which would solely process criminal cases.

Auditor-Controller:

Ms. Carla Carr, Children's Group Home Ombudsman, reported that group home monitoring functions, previously performed by the Auditor-Controller, have been transferred back to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS will perform program audits. Fiscal audits will still be provided by the Auditor-Controller.

Probation Department:

Mr. Howard Wong, Director, Residential-Based Services, reported the following:

- The Probation Department is planning a "Placement Expo", where Probation Deputies can meet with group home providers. Information on the Expo is forthcoming. The Commission is invited to attend the Expo.
- HV (Harbor View) Group Home – 31, #1, has changed its name to Bay View; the name change will be reflected on the next Probation home list. The name change was necessary to eliminate confusion between Harbor View Group Home and the Harbor View lockup facility.
- Juveniles are being released sooner to Family Preservation and Wraparound Programs to facilitate their transition to the community.
- Early release is part of the Functional Family Therapy (FFT) program which has released 281 juveniles since the beginning of the fiscal year, of which there was a 15% recidivism rate.
- Field staffing levels are uneven as a result of vacancies that cannot be filled due to budget cuts.

The Commission requested that Mr. Wong return to the next meeting with information on the amount of caseloads serviced (i.e. youths visited) by Placement Deputies at the Aviva Center, and the caseloads serviced and facility size at the Challenger Memorial Youth Center.

Internal Services Department:

Mr. Luis Enriquez, Building Craft Superintendent, Maintenance Operations Division, reported that cleaning of vents in courthouses is not an ISD function. Vent cleaning is contracted to vendors. Additionally, steam cleaning of jail cells is also performed by a private vendor.

Chair Montañño and the Commissioners thanked the various Department Representatives for their participation and reports.

APPROVAL OF JULY 8, 2009, MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Bacio, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously carried, the minutes of July 8, 2009, were approved as submitted.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Montañño reported on two (2) news articles:

- "ACLU Asks Judge To Halt Jail Closure", Daily Breeze, July 14, 2009, regarding a request made by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) that Sheriff Baca consider closing Men's Central Jail instead of the more modern North Facility at Pitchess Detention Center in Castaic, California.
- "ACLU Asks Judge To Bar Closure of Castaic Jail", Los Angeles Times, July 14, 2009, regarding a request made by the ACLU to bar the Sheriff's Department from closing the North Facility at the Pitchess Detention Center in Castaic, CA beginning on September 1, 2009, in order to deal with a \$25 million cut in the department's budget.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Bacio reported that the current balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$1,425.93.

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OF APRIL-JUNE 2009

On motion of Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Hammargren, and unanimously carried, the Sybil Brand Commission Quarterly Report for the Period of April-June 2009, was approved with the following changes:

- Page 2, under *Children and Family Services*, Ha're John's Paradise

Change from:

Linen closet needs to be cleaned up; closets need to be cleaned and organized; Individual Rights, House Rules and Chores need to be posted; Disaster Drills need to be conducted; all Documentation needs to be in view of children; bathroom needs to be stocked with more toiletries.

To:

Disaster Drills need to be conducted on a consistent basis. (Third request from Commission); all documentation needs to be in view of children; bathroom needs to be stocked with more toiletries; closets need to be cleaned and organized; Individual Rules, House Rules and Chores notice needs to be posted.

- On page 2, under *Sheriff's Department/Court lock-ups*; delete Airport Courthouse entry.

CORRESPONDENCE/AUDIT REPORT

There was none.

FACILITY/GROUP HOME INSPECTION REPORTS FROM JULY 8, 2009, TO JULY 14, 2009

Torrance Branch Court – Commissioners Bacio, Hall and Moore

The facility was visited on July 9, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Areas of Concern: Cells require steam cleaning; however, cells have no drains; suicide kits were not accessible on the 1st floor, and none were found in the upper lock-up area; vents need cleaning.

New Concept Group Home- 13, #4 – Commissioner Montaño

The facility was visited on July 13, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Area of Concern: First aid kit needs restocking.

El Monte Court – Commissioners Hammargren and Montaño

The facility was visited on July 14, 2009, and found to be in unsatisfactory condition.

Areas of Concern: Fire extinguishers are out of date; facility capacity was unknown; turnout gear equipment was strewn and poorly sized; no boots; hallway leading to Sally Port had a barbecue with butane tank sitting by pallets of paper, creating a major safety hazard.

West Hollywood Sheriff's Station – Commissioners Bacio, Hall and Moore

The facility was visited on July 14, 2009, and found to be in excellent condition.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Moore commented that at future business meetings if the primary representative is unable to attend the alternate representative from the departments should be briefed on the Commission's reporting guidelines.

Commissioner Bacio reported that the scholarship process is moving slowly; he will do a follow-up on the applications that he has delivered to various schools.

MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Montaña adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Arana
Commission Services Division